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ABSTRACT

This guide, based on a project to improve services to adult learners at the California State University (CSU) Hayward campus, is designed to help faculty become more aware of the needs of adult learners and to promote the changes that will help institutions in the CSU system to meet those needs. The guide serves as a summary overview of key issues related to institutional support for adult learners, and how this campus is responding to those issues. Part 1, "Support Services for Adult Learners," presents the issues related to adult learner needs and support services, noting the ones that are already offered or planned and which may be adaptable to other institutions. The succeeding parts each focus on particular facets of the project which is the basis for this guide: Part 2: "Inventory of Student Services"; Part 3: "The Student Survey"; and Part 4: "The Student Handbook." In each case, the purpose and goals are discussed, followed by a brief review of the procedures implemented. Where feasible, the actual instruments used or documents produced in completing that facet of the project have been included for inspection. The last part of the guide, part 5, "Project Evaluation," presents a brief summary of the project outcomes. (JB)

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Building Bridges for Adult Learners in Higher Education

A Resource and Planning Guide

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Major objectives of this initiative are as follows:

- increase awareness of the work of the CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning;
- increase access to the work of CSU/ITL affiliates;
- begin to build a subset of information on teaching and learning that supports *The National Teaching and Learning Forum (NTLF)*, ERIC/HE's newsletter;
- encourage use of the ERIC system by CSU/ITL member affiliates and the *NTLF* readership; and
- test a model for collaboration between ERIC/HE and a major higher education system.

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Building Bridges
 for
Adult Learners
in Higher Education

A Resource
and Planning Guide

■ California State University, Hayward

Produced under a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation
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Introduction

Project Background

In the Fall of 1988, a collaborative demonstration project was undertaken between The California State University Center for Innovative Programs* and California State University, Hayward (CSUH). The project, called "Building Bridges for Adult Learners in the CSU," was intended to provide a model program of support services to improve the access and retention of adult learners in the California State University system.

The project was conceived out of the need to address the growing numbers of mature students at CSUH and other CSU campuses who often find themselves in an alien and non-supportive atmosphere. These are primarily part-time students, with scheduling constraints and potential conflicts with other life roles related to work and family. They are frequently "rusty" with respect to academic skills, and fear the risk of failure. In addition, they often need help in how to achieve their career and academic goals, and in moving through the system so that they can best meet these goals.

Project Goals

Recognizing that the services and programs of the campus were not always appropriate or efficiently provided for the adult learner population, CSUH sought the following outcomes as a result of their participation in this project:

- To conduct an inventory of University support services to determine their effectiveness for the adult learner
- To survey the needs of adult learners attending the University
- To develop a handbook for admitted and prospective CSUH adult learners which describes available support services

* The CSU Center for Innovative Programs was established as part of a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to expand the ability of the CSU to serve the adult learner.

- To assess current University community outreach activities -- including community college linkages, admissions policies and procedures, and academic assessment policies and procedures -- to determine their effectiveness for the adult learner
- To develop a series of activities aimed at "bonding" the adult learner to the University and assisting their re-entry into the academic environment
- To lay the groundwork for the development of career assessment and counseling procedures appropriate for the adult learner
- To design and implement an evaluation plan to assess project process and outcomes
- To disseminate to other campuses a model for the design and implementation of support services for adult learners

Project Team

The following individuals from CSUH participated on the project development team:

- Lee Chapman-Ashley, CSUH Re-entry Counselor
- Hal Gin, Director, Office of Student Life
- Renee' M. Ramig, CSUH Re-entry Counselor
- Carolyn Schuetz, Director, Career Planning and Placement Center
- Sharon Truex, Communication and Career Consultant

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How To Use This Guide

Purpose

This *Resource and Planning Guide* has been developed to help you, as an educator, become more aware of the needs of adult learners on your campus and actively promote the changes that will enable your institution to better meet these needs. Rather than providing an extensive analysis of project outcomes, this *Guide* serves as a summary overview of key issues related to institutional support for adult learners, and how one campus is responding to those issues. It is hoped that by building on their experience, you will be able to adapt the goals and procedures presented in this *Guide* to your own institution.

Organization

With the exception of Part One, which presents the key issues related to adult learner needs and support services, each part focuses on a particular facet of the project. In each case, the purpose and goals are discussed, followed by a brief review of the procedures implemented. Where feasible, the actual instruments used or documents produced in completing that facet of the project have been included for your inspection.

The last part of the Guide, Part Five, departs from this format and presents a brief summary of project outcomes.

For More Information

To obtain more information on the project, contact:

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To obtain computer source disks of this *Guide* and/or documents included herein, contact:

Institute for Teaching and Learning
The California State University
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802

Part 1

*Support Services for
Adult Learners*

- Why Adults Are Returning to School*
- Factors That Influence the Re-entry Decision*
- Overcoming the Barriers to Re-entry*
- Support Services: A Critical Need*
- Entry Services: Exploring the Possibilities*
- Moving the Adult Learner Through the System*
- Culminating and Exit Services*
- Publications Related to the Adult Learner from the
California State University*
- References*

Support Services for Adult Learners

Background

The demand for education oriented to the needs of the adult learner has become a major societal force in the world today. While it threatens to overload conventional educational resources, it also has the potential to lead us into new educational frontiers by meeting K. Patricia Cross' goal of achieving "education for each" by the end of this century (1976, p. 3-4).

To meet this challenge, educational institutions must be both sensitive and responsive to the special barriers faced by adults returning to school. These barriers, which are both personal and institutional, call for a re-examination of range and quality of the services provided to help adult learners enter, move through, and exit the institution.

Purpose

In this section you will be introduced to some of the services that are already being offered or planned to meet the educational needs of adult learners, many of which may be adaptable to your own institution.

Why Adults Are Returning to School

It has been known for some time that adult learners are lifelong learners. Although the vast majority of this learning occurs outside of the classroom, the number of adults returning to school is increasing significantly. According to the Center for Educational Statistics, between 1970 and 1985 the number of persons 25 and over enrolling in institutions of higher learning increased by 114 percent.

In exploring the reasons for the influx of adults into the academic setting, there appears to be at least three forces at play:

- **Advances in technology which make present scientific and technical knowledge quickly obsolete.**

Scientific and technical information has been increasing at about 13% per year, doubling every five years. This rate is expected to increase to 40% (Naisbett, 1982).

- **Changes in the workplace which signal a shift from an industrial society to an information state.**

The explosion of information is being matched by a rapid increase in the number of people who work with it. Whereas 17% of the American workforce -- managers, bankers, programmers, teachers, etc. -- was employed in information jobs in 1950, at least 60% had similar jobs in 1982.

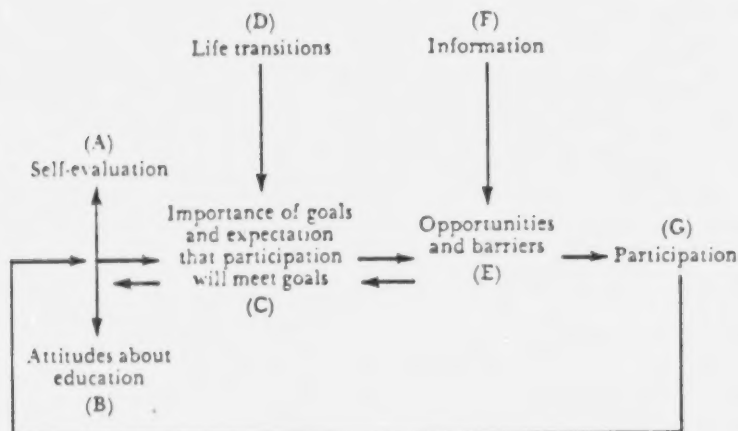
- **A growing recognition by the individual worker that re-education and re-training is the key to ensuring employment and employability; in other words, learning and earning are related.**

"The more people know, the more often they will go back to school throughout their working lives. The more people have learned--the more they come to rely on organized learning--the more they get into the habit of going to school. But also, the more they know, the more conscious they are of their ignorance."

Peter Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity*

Factors That Influence the Re-entry Decision

What is it that makes some adults return to higher education while others do not? In her book *Adults as Learners* (1981), K. Patricia Cross proposed a model for understanding why adults participate in formal learning activities. The model is based on the assumption that participation in educational activities is actually a chain of responses, each based on an evaluation of the position of the individual in his or her environment (Cross, 1981, p. 125). Note that at the outset, the individual's decision is predominantly influenced by personal factors, while external factors become more important as he or she progresses through the chain.



Cross, K. P. (1976). *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Reprinted with permission.

Each of the factors presented in the model is explained in more detail below:

- A. *Self-evaluation.* Research shows that people who lack confidence in their abilities avoid putting themselves to the test and are unlikely to volunteer for learning that may threaten their self-esteem.
- B. *Attitudes about education.* These attitudes arise from the individual's own past experience and indirectly from the attitudes and experiences of others, including friends, "significant others," and reference or membership groups.
- C. *Importance of goals and the expectation that participation will meet goals.* If a goal that is important to a person is likely to be achieved through further education, then the motivation at point C is strong. If either the goal is unimportant or the likelihood of success is in doubt, motivation will decrease accordingly.
- D. *Life transitions.* These include periods of change calling for adjustment to new phases of the life cycle as well as sudden and dramatic changes such as divorce or loss of employment which trigger a latent desire for education into action.
- E. *Opportunities and barriers.* If the individual reaches point E with a strong desire to participate, their motivation will encourage them to seek out special opportunities and overcome most barriers.
- F. *Information.* It is at this point that critical information is needed to link motivated learners to appropriate opportunities. Without accurate information, point E is weak because opportunities may not be discovered and barriers loom large.
- G. *Participation.* A variety of conditions must be met before the adult actually participates in formal learning. Many of these conditions involve overcoming institutional, situational, or personal barriers, many of which are described below:
 - *Institutional Barriers:* Educational procedures and practices that prevent or discourage adult learners. These include policies and procedures regarding application, admission, enrollment, transfer of credit, class scheduling, etc.

- *Situational Barriers:* Obstacles arising out of one's situation in life at a given time. For example, children needing care or supervision, transportation to classes, financial constraints, etc.
- *Dispositional and Personal Barriers:* Personal concerns frequently pose greater obstacles to returning to school than either institutional or situational barriers. Almost all adult learners struggle at some point with one or more of the following types of concerns:
 - *Time:* Finding time for education in a day full of activity is the most commonly reported obstacle for adults returning to school. Disorganization or poor management of time is rarely the cause. Rather, it is the busy, complex life they lead, with its many role expectations. Almost all adult learners must learn how to juggle the various demands, responsibilities, commitments, distractions, and preoccupations which make up their life so that time can be set aside for educational pursuits.
 - *Lack of Self-Confidence:* Apprehension about the unknown is understandable as adults begin a new educational experience. New students very commonly experience academic insecurity and question whether their skills and abilities will be adequate. "Can I do it?" "Am I too rusty?" "Will I fit?"
 - *Family Reactions:* The return to school marks a change for all members of the family. Initial support for a decision to return to school may dwindle when the reality of the commitment becomes apparent. Adult learners even face resentment or other guilt-producing feelings as they find less time to meet the needs of family and/or friends. Although these feelings typically subside after family members have time to adjust to the change, an unsupportive or more actively resentful family may be a continuing obstacle.

Overcoming the Barriers to Re-entry

For counselors and administrative staff to have an impact on the barriers confronting adults returning to school, they must look closely at the institutional services they provide. Upon examining the environment provided by most traditional institutions of higher learning, it becomes apparent that many of these services either fail to accommodate or directly oppose the needs of adult learners.

**TABLE 1-1: NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS VERSUS
THE TYPICAL ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

Adult Learner	Higher Education Environment
Adult learners possess characteristics that are both similar and dissimilar to traditional learners.	Adult learners often are viewed as identical to traditional students and no program adjustments are made.
Adult learners need to be recognized, legitimized, understood and deserve institutional response.	Adult learners are often neglected; the image of college students is the resident 18-24 year old student.
Adult learners are not a uniform type. They can best be characterized by their heterogeneity.	The campus environment treats all students--including adult learners--the same way.
Adult learners have developmental and maturational skill building needs, as well as service needs.	Programs for adult learners frequently center on a narrow range of counseling and advising services.
Adult learner interests may revolve around multiple roles not necessarily centered on campus.	Competing priorities for student's time are often seen as a lack of commitment to higher education.
Adult learners have many demands on their time and may need flexibility in schedules to complete assignments and requirements.	Programs and academic calendars are usually inflexible, are built around specific timelines (e.g., semesters) and assume full time study.

Adult Learner

Adult learners live in communities away from the campus.

Adult learners have a great need for a clear, precise campus information system, both formal and informal.

Adult learners need meeting places that afford social opportunities or quiet settings for study and relaxation.

Adult learners need opportunities often associated with residence on campus--more time with faculty, more intensive peer interaction time, and a closer integration of their living and learning experience.

Adult learners remain embedded within their peer or family culture/patterns.

Adult learners live in communities as citizens. These communities place demands and responsibilities on students and therefore afford them citizenship rights.

Adult learners have a rich array of prior experience in many life roles.

Adult learners have ongoing role/status transitions relating to their education.

Higher Education Environment

Programs and services are done primarily on campus. Facilities and services often are not available in the evenings or at satellite centers.

The decentralized structure of most campuses means that information dissemination is scattered or frequently done by word of mouth.

If such space exists, it often is only in one central place like a student union.

Most opportunities to meet interpersonal needs are informal outside classrooms and require student's initiative.

Student services do not support family role responsibilities and commitments.

Higher education usually does not acknowledge this citizenship and does not assist in making linkages between classroom learning and these off-campus responsibilities.

Advising process does not assist adult learners relate prior learning to plan of study.

Support services provide a narrow range of assistance based on the needs of the 18-24 age group.

Adapted from Sheckley, B. G. (1985). Appreciating individual differences. *CAEL News*, 8.

Support Services: A Critical Need

Unlike the traditional full-time student, for whom the educational experience is the major preoccupation, the adult learner must juggle a variety of roles and demands simultaneously. Without proper support, these demands -- which include occupation, family, and/or community responsibilities -- may become barriers to higher education.

- Institutional Barriers, including policies and procedures related to:
 - Application
 - Admission
 - Enrollment
 - Credit transfer
 - Class scheduling
- Situational Barriers
 - Child care
 - Transportation
 - Finances
 - Work schedule
- Dispositional and Personal Barriers
 - Time
 - Self-confidence
 - Family reactions
 - Special obstacles

To overcome these sizable barriers, adult learners need a strong support system, particularly at the institutional level. This institutional support must not only address the logistical barriers of participation (time, pace, and place) but also the psychological barriers. Both faculty and staff must recognize that becoming acculturated to the diverse norms and resources peculiar to the academic environment requires a substantial amount of learning and adjustment on the part of the adult learner.

Services provided to address these needs must be both comprehensive and individualized to account for the diversity of backgrounds, motivations, and abilities that characterize adult students. They can be grouped into three categories:

- Entry Services
- Ongoing Services
- Culminating and Exit Services

Entry Services: Exploring the Possibilities

Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering (1989) have proposed an Entry Education Center which would provide the following services:

- *Recruitment* -- with particular attention to the readability level and appearance of recruitment literature and admissions information; the availability of toll-free telephone access and face-to-face contact opportunities (i.e., information booths); and relevant marketing issues.
- *Admissions* -- with particular attention to tracking students within the entry process; evaluation of informal as well as formal educational experiences to assist in determining eligibility; shortening of the admissions process; and assessment of potential situational barriers to participation.
- *Financial Aid* -- with special emphasis on distribution and assisting adults in completion of necessary forms; redefining what constitutes financial "need" so that adults get their fair share; changing requirements originally established for younger students (i.e., parent's signature, degree orientation, etc.); and identifying support opportunities in the community (i.e., employers).
- *Orientation* -- with concern for programs that are accessible and substantive in helping potential students examine their own needs, and that promote contact with faculty and staff.
- *Developmental Assessment* -- provides an opportunity for adult learners to assess their place in the life cycle, career and professional goals, avocational interests, interpersonal and leadership skills, and personal values.
- *Assessment of Prior Learning* -- provides an opportunity for adult learners to gain recognition and/or credit for their work and life experiences, special strengths, and accomplishments.

Moving the Adult Learner Through the System

Once the adult learner is matriculated, how is she/he supported throughout the program? How are the competing demands kept in balance, the supports and challenges provided to enable the student to tolerate the stresses of the academic environment and optimize his/her development?

Repeatedly, adult learners express the need to be noticed, to feel respected as an individual (Schlossberg, et al., 1989). If these needs are unmet, the initial commitment and enthusiasm that drew them into the educational system may turn into frustration and eventual submission to the barriers they confront. Practices that encourage, rather than discourage involvement throughout their academic experience include:

- Convenient access to advisors by telephone
- Extended hours for institutional services and personnel
- Increased awareness among faculty and staff regarding ageism and aging
- Provision of structural options (i.e., child care, financial aid, etc.) and psychological options (i.e., increased ability to perceive and/or create alternatives)
- Acknowledgment and encouragement of skill mastery and student accomplishments throughout the curriculum
- Reinforcement of the sense of community often lacking among adult learners

Culminating and Exit Services

Traditionally, exit services have been the least developed of all student services. Career placement services are frequently limited to on-site interviews with company representatives seeking bright, young graduates. Instruction in resume' writing, interviewing, and job hunting may be provided, but administered in a fragmented, decentralized manner. For adult learners, who may fear that age may be a barrier to employment, these services are as crucial to a successful culmination of the education experience as entry services are to its beginning.

The exiting process should minimally consist of four major components (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989):

- *An exit course which helps learners integrate their learning*
- *Reviews with advisors and counselors*
- *Referrals for career planning and placement services*
- *Referrals for the transition process*

A culminating course can help adults integrate their learning from courses, programs and life experiences, and assist them in making a transition from the institution to the outside world. By providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the meaning of their learning, students can take appropriate steps to plan for the future.

Transition groups are another service that can help adult learners prepare for life outside of the institution. In such groups, students are encouraged to explore situations, supports, strategies, and most of all, themselves. In the process, they confront the endings and new beginnings, and may develop their own rituals for making the transition.

***Publications Related to the Adult Learner from
the California State University***

The Adult Learner in Higher Education: A Resource and Planning Guide

Strategies for Instructional Development: A Resource and Planning Guide

*Helping Adults Learn - An Orientation Workshop: Participant Workbook
and Facilitator's Guide*

Profiles in Adult Learning: Videotape Series

Transitions -- William Bridges

Reconfiguring the Workforce -- Morris Keeton

Mainstreaming -- Carol Aslanian

*Learning is Where You Find It: A New Instructional Bandwidth ---
Dee Brock*

Critical Thinking --- Stephen Brookfield

Facilitating Adult Learning Encounters -- Stephen Brookfield

*First Impressions Last: An Educational Ecology --Arthur
Chickering*

Corporate Education -- Nell Eurich

Legal Access: Who Speaks for Adult Learners? -- Michael Goldstein

*Theory Applied: New Contexts for Experiential Learning -- Leah
Harvey*

Empowering Learners Through Leadership -- George Pruitt

Working Smarter: The Full Wisdom of Experience -- Barry Sheckley

Accreditation: Alliances for Quality -- Patricia Thrash

For further information and order form, contact:

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Part 2

*Inventory of Student
Services*

- Purpose and Goals*
- Process*
- Findings*
- Conclusions and Recommendations*
- Re-entry Student Services Questionnaire*
- Inventory of Services Summary*

Inventory of Student Services

Purpose and Goals

An inventory of support services was conducted at California State University, Hayward (CSUH) to determine what services were actually available, and how effective they were in meeting the needs of adult learners. The following services were identified for inclusion in the inventory:

- Admissions and Records
- Career Planning and Placement
- Child Care Services
- Computing Services
- Cooperative Education
- Counseling Services
- Disabled Student Services
- Educational Support Services
- Equal Opportunity Program
- EXCEL Program
- Extended Education/Open University
- Financial Aid
- Housing and Residential Life
- Instructional Media Services
- Learning Resources
- Major Advising
- Student Affirmative Action
- Student Development
- Student Health Services
- Testing Services

In addition to assessing these services at the main campus, services at the Contra Costa Center were also included in the inventory.

Process

To assess the current status of these support services at CSUH, project team members personally interviewed at least one administrator from each of the programs listed. Personal interviews were essential to determine what services were really provided, as opposed to what were described in the University catalog.

The instrument used to record the interview data is reproduced on the following pages. In addition to the inventory, an inventory summary form was designed to integrate the results of the interviews and solicit recommendations from members of the project team.

Findings

In general, most of the administrative personnel interviewed were aware of the large number of CSUH re-entry/adult learners. However, most of these individuals also admitted that they had no staff or special help to accommodate these students. Although most of the interviewees agreed that there was a need for services geared for the adult learner, lack of staff and funding were usually cited as major barriers to developing or implementing these services.

Areas that were specifically identified as needing improvement included:

- *Service hours* -- most felt that extended evening hours were needed.
- *Awareness of available assistance* -- many felt that campus staff should be better trained to provide appropriate referrals.
- *Staff sensitivity* -- many considered the lack of staff specifically trained to work with re-entry students to be a significant barrier.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In many cases, the project team found that there were significant differences between the described service and its actual implementation. They found that the interpretation and implementation of a given service is highly dependent on the availability and experience of those who provide the service. The project team validated the claims made by many interviewees that the quality of service is also highly dependent on the availability of funding.

The team also noted that the perception of the re-entry student appeared to be very unclear among the interviewees. This lack of clarity may have contributed to the absence of tracking systems to identify the re-entry population. One of the recommendations proposed by the project team to address these concerns was the development and implementation of workshops to increase faculty awareness and understanding of adult re-entry students.

Re-entry Student Services Questionnaire

INTERVIEWER:

NAME OF SERVICE:

PERSON CONTACTED:

JOB TITLE:

DATE:

-
1. What services do you offer? Anything specific for re-entry students?

 2. What are your hours?

 3. May students make appointments? Day:_____ Night:_____
Weekends:_____
 4. May a non-registered person use your services? Yes____ No____
Any exceptions?

 5. Do you have a tracking system to identify specific characteristics of those who use your services?

 6. Do you have specific staff targeted to work with certain populations such as those mentioned above?

 7. Do you publicize your service(s) other than in the CSUH catalog and schedule? Yes____ No____ If yes, what type of publicity?

8. How would you define the term "re-entry student"?

9. In what ways do you find re-entry students and their needs different from traditional students?

10. What barriers to the use of your services might re-entry students encounter?

11. What new services or change in services would you offer re-entry students if you had the needed funds/personnel?

INTERVIEWER COMMENTS: (Problems, type of interview -- phone, face-to-face)

INVENTORY OF SERVICES SUMMARY

DEPARTMENTS SURVEYED:

CONTACT PERSON:

HOURS:

OVERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS:

CONCERNS:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Part 3

The Student Survey

- Purpose and Goals*
- Process*
- Findings*
- Conclusions and Recommendations*
- Student Survey Form*
- Recommended Changes to Student Survey Form*

The Student Survey

Purpose and Goals

In December, 1988, CSUH Office of Student Life developed and conducted the Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey. The goals of the survey were to:

- Develop a profile of the CSUH adult student
- Document their utilization and evaluation of existing services
- Determine their unmet needs for services, both current and anticipated
- Identify those individuals wanting to join a support group for networking and referral opportunities

Process

Students were defined as adult learners if they were age 25 years or older, and currently enrolled at CSUH. Of the 6,950 students meeting these criteria, 6,000 were surveyed using the instrument presented later in this section. Of these, 2,281 (38%) responded to either the initial or follow-up mailings. The findings and conclusions that are summarized on the following pages were based on an analysis of 2,258 (37%) usable responses.

The data from these responses were analyzed to determine the demographic characteristics of survey respondents; their current and future needs for services already provided; patterns of service utilization; extent to which existing services met their needs; unmet needs for services; and desire to join a support group. Once frequency distributions were obtained for each of these variables, further analysis was conducted to determine variations by age, sex, campus site, student status (full-time/part-time), attendance (day/night), and degree (undergraduate/graduate).

Findings

Based on the analysis, significant findings appeared which provided valuable insight into the services needed by various types of students. These findings suggested the following general trends:

- Evening students rated services significantly lower than their daytime counterparts. This may have reflected frustration over the availability of evening services rather than a qualitative assessment.
- The most frequently cited needs/concerns expressed by respondents included: the need for extended class and office hours; time constraints; availability/accuracy of major advising; counseling services; financial services; childcare services; career planning and placement opportunities; personal adjustment to student life.
- One in five students asked to be contacted for participation in a support group. One in three said they were undecided. Most students indicated that evenings and weekends were the best times to meet.

For further information regarding the results of the survey, contact the Director of the CSUH Office of Student Life (see "How to Use this Guide").

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on a preliminary analysis of the survey data, the following initial recommendations were proposed by the project team:

- Extend the hours of classes, administrative offices, and student services.
- Fund a Re-entry Center and appropriate professional staff address the needs and concerns of adult students.
- Sponsor workshops and support group opportunities for adult students on evenings and weekends.

- Sponsor workshops to sensitize major advisors and service providers to the needs and concerns of adult students.
- Address some of the needs and concerns of adult students in an appropriate existing course required for entering students.

In addition to these programmatic recommendations, the project team identified the following areas for improvement with respect to the survey instrument itself. Some of these suggested changes are included at the end of this section.

- The survey form could be more specific in the information it solicits.
- More definitions are needed to identify the specific services mentioned. For example, many students were unable to distinguish among the terms *counseling*, *re-entry counseling*, *G. E. advising*, and *major advising*.
- Add the library and student union to the list of student services surveyed.

California State University, Hayward (CSUH) Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey

You have been selected to participate in an adult learner needs assessment survey to determine the kinds of services needed by students such as yourself while attending CSU, Hayward. Please help us by taking just a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. The information you provide is confidential and will be used for planning and development purposes to better serve your unique needs. To mail, please fold completed questionnaire as indicated and **RETURN BY JANUARY 19**. Thank you for your cooperation.

Demographic Data (check responses)

1. Attend classes

1. ☐ Hayward 2. ☐ Contra Costa

2. Class Attendance

1. ☐ Day 2. ☐ Night 3. ☐ Both

3. Student Status

1. ☐ Full Time 2. ☐ Part-time

4. Degree Purpose

1. ☐ Undergraduate 2. ☐ Graduate
3. ☐ Non-degree/certificate

5. Working Status

1. ☐ Full time 2. ☐ Part-time
3. ☐ Not employed

6. Sex 1. ☐ Male 2. ☐ Female

7. Age 1. ☐ Under 25 2. ☐ 25-29 3. ☐ 30-34
4. ☐ 35-39 5. ☐ 40-44 6. ☐ 45-49
7. ☐ 50-54 8. ☐ 55-59 9. ☐ 60+

8. Marital Status

1. ☐ Married 2. ☐ Single 3. ☐ Separated
4. ☐ Divorced 5. ☐ Widowed

9. Number of dependent children in home _____

10. What has been the longest break in your education since leaving high school?

1. ☐ Summer vacations only 5. ☐ 6 to 9 years
2. ☐ less than 1 year 6. ☐ 10 to 19 years
3. ☐ 1 to 2 years 7. ☐ 20+ years
4. ☐ 3 to 5 years

Student Assessment

The following is a list of services currently offered by CSUH. In the space provided, please rate:

- Your current need for each service,
- Your anticipated need for each service,
- And, if used, the extent to which each service met your needs

11. Your Current Need for Service					12. Your Anticipated Need for Service					13. Rating of Services Used				
VERY HIGH	HIGH	LOW	NONE	DON'T KNOW	VERY HIGH	HIGH	LOW	NONE	DON'T KNOW	SERVICES				
											EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
										Admissions & Records				
										Career Planning and Placement				
										Cooperative Education (paid jobs relating to major)				
										Children's Day Care Center				
										Counseling Services				
										Disabled Student Services				
										Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)				
										EXCEL (Educational services for first generation, low income, or disabled students)				
										Financial Aid				
										General Education Advising				
										Learning Center (tutoring, learning skills workshops)				
										Major Advising				
										Special Adult Admission Program				
										Student Development (clubs & social programs)				
										Student Government				
										Student Health Services (full clinic with pharmacy)				
										Testing and Educational Services				

14. What services which are not provided do you currently need or anticipate needing?

1. ☐ None 2. Current Services Needed (specify) _____

3. Anticipated Services Needed (specify) _____

15. What problems or concerns are you experiencing related to your adult student role? 1. ☐ None

2. Specify _____

16. Would you be interested in participating in a support group that provides networking and referral opportunities for adult students? 1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No 3. ☐ Uncertain

17. If yes, please indicate the following

1. Best times to meet _____ 2. Possible locations _____

3. Suggested topics _____

18. If you would like to be contacted about support group opportunities, indicate day and/or evening telephone number where you can be reached.

Day (☐) _____ Evening (☐) _____

19. Additional Comments _____

Thank you for your cooperation. Please fold completed questionnaire as indicated
and return by January 19, 1989.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO STUDENT SURVEY FORM

Item 7. Age: 1. 25-29 2. 30-39 3. 40-49 4. 50+

Item 8. Marital Status: 1. Married 2. Single

Item 9: **Delete**

Item 10. What is the longest period of time that you were away from school?

1. less than 1 year
2. 1 year
3. 2-3 years
4. 4-6 years
5. 7-10 years
6. more than 10 years

Item 13: Emphasize that students are to rate **only** those services that he/she has used.

Item 15: **Delete**

Item 16. Would you be interested in participating in a support group that provides networking and referral opportunities for adult students?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Phone # _____

Item 17: **Delete**

Item 18: **Delete**

Part 4

The Student Handbook

-Purpose and Goals

-Process

-Findings

-Conclusions and Recommendations

The Student Handbook

Purpose and Goals

One of the proposed outcomes of the "Building Better Bridges" project was the development of a resource manual that would help re-entry students assess their personal and academic skill needs, and connect them with appropriate resources on or off campus. *Returning to College: A Resource and Planning Guide for CSUH Students* was designed to accomplish the following with respect to this central purpose:

- Familiarize adult students with the Hayward campus and services
- "Demystify" the world of higher education
- Help adult students assess their skills and attitudes
- Provide suggestions for improving classroom skills and classroom achievement
- Increase the self-confidence and motivation of adult students
- Help adult students become more self-directed
- Enable adults to identify with the feelings and experiences of other re-entry students
- Provide opportunities for adult students to identify, value, and build on their life experiences
- Guide adult students into organizing their thinking regarding their future

The document which resulted from this effort communicates two important messages to adult students who use the *Guide*:

- You are not alone -- your feelings and experiences are shared by many others.
- You **can** return to school and complete it successfully.

Process

Although not directly related to the student assessment survey, the *Guide* was designed to address many of the concerns later expressed by respondents. The content of the *Guide* drew on the documented experiences of adult learners in other institutions of higher learning, as well as current research on what strategies help adults succeed in such institutions. After an extensive literature search in this area, the project team's instructional designers developed a list of major topic areas which were distributed for review by the rest of the team. These topic areas were then developed into chapters by different members of the project team and integrated with exercises to help the user assess and improve his or her skills in that area.

The format of the *Guide*, which is included in Appendix A of this report, was designed for maximum flexibility. It can be used by individual students as an independent study guide or by groups of students in informal workshops. Rather than including specific information such as names, room numbers, and telephone numbers in the *Guide* itself, a bookmark was created to provide this type of information. In this way, the life-span of the book can be prolonged indefinitely, while the bookmark is inexpensively updated on a semester-by-semester basis.

The final *Guide* was reviewed and approved by the project team, which included an adult student working toward a degree in Counseling.

Findings

As development of the *Guide* proceeded, it became a more integral part of the project. Originally intended to provide useful information on campus services, its scope expanded to include transitional issues encountered by the re-entry population. It also incorporates activities for self-awareness as well as guidelines for learning new skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While the development of the *Guide* was more complex and time-consuming than anticipated, the project team felt that a useful product had been created. Utilization of the *Guide*, however, will depend on the availability of funds to support the printing of the document while keeping it affordable for the student.

Except for the sections on "where to go for help on campus" the design of the *Guide* is generic enough to be adapted to other campus settings. It is available through the CSUH bookstore at a modest cost. To obtain the computer source disks for the *Guide*, contact:

The California State University
Institute for Teaching and Learning
Office of the Chancellor
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802-4275
(213) 590-5856

Part 5

Project Evaluation

*-Project Outcomes
-Recommendations*

Project Evaluation

Project Outcomes

While the project "Building Bridges for Adult Learners in the CSU" was expected to last eight months, the project in actuality took 12 months to complete. During that time, the following objectives were met:

- University services were inventoried in order to facilitate re-entry student tracking and to assess the attitudes and knowledge of support service staff with respect to these students.
- Re-entry students at CSUH were surveyed regarding their past, present and future needs with respect to support services. A total of 6000 surveys were mailed, yielding 2258 responses.
- A handbook was collaboratively developed by project team members to help familiarize re-entry students with the university environment and the many issues confronting them during their stay there.
- A wine and cheese social event was organized to provide an opportunity for re-entry students to network and learn about the University's Career Planning and Placement Center.
- Follow-up contacts were made with students responding to the survey. In addition, a list of all students interested in networking at CSUH was developed.
- An orientation workshop for adult learners was developed and presented.
- Plans were developed to publish a newsletter and present additional workshops on issues elicited from the survey.
- An overview of the project outcomes, survey findings, and recommendations was presented to the University's President, Vice President, and Deans.

In addition to these anticipated outcomes, several unanticipated outcomes were noted as the project reached completion. These unanticipated outcomes included:

- The investment of time required to complete the project far exceeded that originally anticipated.
- The number of responses to the student survey were less than originally expected.
- The student services provided by the University as assessed through the inventory were less than expected.
- The validation of each member's ideas and input by the rest of the project team promoted a high level of project effectiveness.
- A useful product in the form of the student handbook was created, even though this was not one of the original project objectives.
- The inclusion of an adult student on the project team provided an important perspective which enhanced project effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on their findings and experiences in achieving these outcomes, project team members proposed a series of recommendations for each phase of the project. These recommendations are briefly summarized below.

Team Selection

- Carefully evaluate the compatibility among team members in terms of personalities and expertise. If these compatibilities are unclear, the team should meet on a trial basis in order to ensure the success of the project.
- Evaluate the relationship of team members to the political authorities within the University.
- If possible, have every team member contribute to the grant proposal.

- Ensure that every team member is valued for his or her particular expertise and contribution to the project. An egalitarian attitude among all team members is the key to a successful group effort.
- If possible, distinguish between the "designers" and the "implementors" on the project.
- Identify those team members who have expertise in translating raw data into a usable form.
- Evaluate the level of dedication each team member brings to the project; i.e., are they willing to participate in the tedious tasks as well?
- Future projects of this nature should ideally include:
 - *A career integration specialist*
 - *Academic institution specialists (2); one person who has had direct experience working with re-entry students, and one person who works for the institution and is familiar with its policies and services*
 - *A counseling specialist; i.e., a person who can understand the psychological, sociological, and familial issues facing re-entry students*
 - *One or more re-entry students*
 - *An administrative supervisor to oversee the work of the team*

Project Proposal

- Ensure that the goals of the project are realistic for the time frame allotted.
- Strive to make project scope and expectations as specific as possible during the proposal stage.
- Ensure that those individuals implementing project outcomes are consulted regarding their feasibility.
- Carefully evaluate each project goal in terms of the objectives and tasks required to achieve it.

- Ensure that each team member has the same understanding and "vision" of what the project is expected to achieve.

Team Interaction

- Consider holding meetings in less structured settings (i.e., members' homes) to promote more open communication and team cohesiveness.

Inventory of Services

- Have each team member select departments based on their areas of interest and/or expertise so that they can speak the same language as the interviewees.

Student Needs Assessment Survey

- Implement a systemwide computer code for the category of "re-entry student" for tracking through Admissions and Records.
- Change the CSU application form to include the above category.
- Allow sufficient time for respondents to return the completed survey form.
- Prepare a form letter acknowledging students who requested networking opportunities. Inform them of future plans resulting from their input.

Wine and Cheese Social

- Allow sufficient time for students to network with each other.
- Fully orient guest speakers to the overall purpose of the project before asking them to participate in such events.
- Provide business cards with information on relevant re-entry services and space for the exchange of names and phone numbers.
- Provide equivalent experiences for students attending satellite campuses.

Handbook Development

- Elect one person on the team to be responsible for the final writing style of the document.
- Employ professional editors to review the final copy so that team members can focus on content.
- Identify support personnel who can provide expertise regarding the publishing of the document.
- Identify funding to support the printing of the document, allowing for potential increases in size and distribution.

It is hoped that these recommendations will serve to both caution and encourage groups who undertake similar projects. As the CSUH project team became more finely tuned and its members personally connected, they were able to develop increasingly creative solutions to problems encountered during the completion of this project.